

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT ON THE INDIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

1. A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE BY S. DHARMARAJAN IN THE MARCH 8 "TIMES OF INDIA" AGAIN REPORTS THAT INDIAN SCIENTISTS ARE WORKING TO DEVELOP FOR USE AT TARAPUR A METAL OR OXIDE FUEL MIX OF PLUTONIUM EXTRACTED FROM SPENT FUEL RODS AND URANIUM. THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL, HE NOTES, SINCE THE ENRICHED URANIUM "PROMISED" BY PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOT COME AND, WHEN THAT IS EXHAUSTED SIX MONTHS AFTER ITS ARRIVAL, "THE AMERICAN PIPELINE WILL DRY UP." MOREOVER, "EXPERTS" CONSIDER THE ACCUMULATED STOCKS OF SPENT FUEL "AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD." TO DHARMARAJAN, "IT IS PLAIN LOGIC THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT OBJECT TO USE OF THE SPENT FUEL RODS OF THE FUEL SUPPLIED BY IT IN A PLANT EVERYTHING ABOUT WHICH IT KNOWS. INDIA HAS, AFTER ALL, PAID FOR THE FUEL."

2. DHARMARAJAN ALSO OBSERVES THAT THE US HAS LET INDIA DOWN IN THE SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER BY NOT FOLLOWING UP PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROMISE TO "MAKE GOOD" THE SHORTAGE CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION IN THE BARODA PLANT. FURTHER SUPPLIES OF HEAVY WATER FROM THE USSR, HE NOTES, WILL BE GOVERNED BY IAEA INSPECTION RULES, WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC.
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EXPERTS, HE REPORTS, ARE SUGGESTING THAT BIG FERTILIZER COMPLEXES BE GEARED TO PRODUCE HEAVY WATER AS A BY-PRODUCT, AND HE ADDS THAT IF EQUIPMENT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE AT BARODA IS NOT AVAILABLE INDIGENOUSLY, "THERE SHOULD BE NO CONSTRAINT ON IMPORTING IT." IN THE MEANTIME, "THE EXPLOSION AT BARODA, THE EARLIER STRIKE AND VIOLENCE IN KOTA AND THE RECENT WORK STOPPAGE IN THE NUCLEAR

FUEL COMPLEX IN HYDERABAD HAVE COME IN CCCH SUCCESSION
AS TO AROUSE SUSPICION OF SOME DESIGNS TO DISRUPT INDIA'S
NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM."

3. DHARMARAJAN THINKS THAT THE RS. 39 CRORE (DOLS 43.8 MILLION)
ALLOCATION TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN NUCLEAR
BUDGET LOOKS "PITIFULLY SMALL" CONSIDERING THAT INDIA WILL
HAVE TO GO IN FOR A NEW TECHNOLOGY BASED ON ITS EXTENSIVE
THORIUM RESERVES.
GOHEEN

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